

Resist Black Industrial Relations Bill

UTUC (LENIN SARANI)'S CALL TO THE WORKING PEOPLE

The 'black' Bill on industrial relations brought in the parliament by the Janata Party is a monstrous attack on the trade union movement unprecedented in its bluntness and inconceivably crude in its attempt to rob the working people of all their hard-earned rights achieved through struggles during the last fifty years.

It is a piece of legislation that wants to put the trade union movement into a straight-jacket of compulsory adjudication or negotiation so as to force the workers to accept the dictated terms of the capitalists and the government. With pretensions and deceptive cloak, the Bill seeks to remove the concept of class struggle from the industrial field.

The Bill, in short, seeks (i) to bring total ban on strike in organised sector covering industries listed in twelve categories with enough elasticity and can be extended anytime by the government. It makes strike almost impossible in other industries also; (ii) to restrict further, registration of trade unions; (iii) to interfere into internal functioning of trade unions and put ban on all democratic forms of movement; (iv) to curtail freedom of choice of the workers in choosing their representative trade union. It is clear, therefore, that the Bill is brazenly in favour of the capitalist class and tries to institutionalise the Emergency or impose a so-called industrial peace calculated to reduce the workers to the position of bonded labour. Hitherto in all labour legislations, at least in words, the cause of the weaker section was defended, which is totally absent here. There is therefore no question of any bargaining over the Bill, it must go lock, stock and barrel. To enter into any negotiation with the government on the plea of rectification or amendment as the Central Labour Minister is inviting to do is to walk into the trap laid, knowingly or unknowingly. This will be an act of gross

betrayal to the solemn cause of the working people.

The working people will have to be wide awake to the danger and realise the hard lesson that (Contd. to Page 8)

CENTRAL COMMITTEE

ON CHICKMAGALUR BY-ELECTION

BEFORE

[The Central Committee Statement on 27th October was circulated in a leaflet form to the electorate by the Karnataka State Organising Committee.]

"After the most ignominious defeat in the last general election Mrs. Indira Gandhi is again seeking her election to the Lok Sabha from the Chikmagalur Constituency of Karnataka. Mrs. Gandhi could venture to contest in this by-election even after being totally rejected by the people only nearly two years back because of the quick exposure of the anti-

people character of the Janata Party and the growing mass discontent against its misrule on the one hand, and the absence of a united front of the genuine Left and democratic parties and forces on the other. During the last general election, although in the face of the unprecedented outbursts of mass anger against Mrs. Gandhi's regime, the ruling bourgeois class projected another alternative, the Janata Party to divert the mass discontent lest it took an anti-capitalist turn, afterwards it was taking every opportunity (Contd. to Page 6)

AFTER

The Central Committee of Socialist Unity Centre of India issued on 9th November '78 the following Statement to the press on the result of Chikmagalur by-election:

"It is a matter of great shock and concern that despite deep rooted resentment of and denunciation by the common people and despite her total negation of all democratic norms and institutions, that Smt. Gandhi has won in the election. Thanks to the out and out anti-people policies of the Janata Government and the

persistent refusal by the leadership of the CPI and CPI(M) to form the historically needed United Front of the genuine Left and democratic forces that Smt. Indira Gandhi could carve-out so easily this re-entry into parliament within so short a span of time.

"We firmly hold that this victory of Smt. Gandhi does not *ipso facto* absolve her of the crimes she committed against the people particularly during the Emergency, far less make her a democrat from a dictator on the plea of getting the so-called man-

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All India Conference of UTUC (Lenin Sarani) at Patna on February 16—18

Announcing the dates of the incoming conference, Comrade Pritish Chanda, General Secretary, UTUC (Lenin Sarani) urged the Comrades: Take the preparation for the Conference as a movement and not as a routine programme. The working people of our country need a powerful organisation with correct leadership. UTUC (Lenin Sarani) alone can fulfil this need.

In a situation where the workers are trying to raise their heads against mounting capitalist onslaughts, they are faced with twin attacks—one from the brutal bourgeois State machinery and the other from the social democratic treachery of bourgeois hirelings. Carry the revolutionary message of UTUC (Lenin Sarani) deep down to the oppressed, organise them under the fighting banner of UTUC (Lenin Sarani) carry forward the class struggle upward and onward. Make the working

people understand that here in UTUC (Lenin Sarani) they can find the only fighting organisation that has not surrendered their class aspiration to bourgeois parliamentarism-careerism. It alone defends the Flag and upholds the proletarian values.

At an extended meeting of the All India Working Committee and General Council of UTUC (Lenin Sarani) held at Calcutta on 5th and 6th November under the presidentship of Comrade Sudhin Pramanik, the president of the organisa-

tion, it was decided that the All-India Conference that was to have been held in November, since postponed, would be held on 16th, 17th and 18th February '79 at Patna.

Comrade Pritish Chanda at the outset explained the unprecedented situation created due to flood havoc in West Bengal, Bihar, UP, Haryana, Delhi and other states which was nothing other than a national disaster. In such a situation, leaders, organisers and workers of the organisation plunged themselves into relief and rescue operation for the flood victims. The organisation puts on record their heroic role in the midst of heavy odds and particularly when the governments both at the Centre and in States showed shocking callousness. The

meeting however approved of the decision of deferment. The meeting, in the resolutions adopted, demanded: a) Government's taking full responsibility for relief and rehabilitation of the flood victims as also plugging the loopholes in the matter of flood control, b) Condemned brutal police firings and repressions on the working people by the governments both at the Centre and in the States and demanded full implementation of the policy of "non-interference of police in legitimate democratic movements", c) Immediate scrapping of the Industrial Relations Bill. In another resolution, the meeting conveyed the organisation's fighting solidarity with the Bank Employees of Bangladesh.

Proletarian Era

ORGAN OF SOCIALIST UNITY CENTRE OF INDIA (FORTNIGHTLY)
Founder Editor-in-Chief—COMRADE SHIBDAS GHOSH

VOL. 12
No. 6

15th NOVEMBER '78
WEDNESDAY

PRICE 30 P.
Air Surcharge 4 P.

West Bengal Flood Havoc should be taken as a National Disaster

SUCI DEMANDS IN ITS MEMORANDUM TO THE PRIME MINISTER

[Below is the text of the memorandum submitted by the West Bengal State Committee of our Party on 25th October to the Prime Minister when he came to Calcutta.]

The recent floods in West Bengal have played havoc among the people of this State. The deluge now leaves in its trails vast areas in 12 out of the State's 16 districts in a shamble, and millions of people hit directly.

The picture of devastation, as it slowly emerges, gives glimpses of all that happened on the eve of the floods and in the wake of these. The floods came at least in three consecutive phases in a span of less than two months—from August to early October. A record heavy rainfall in the catchment areas had contributed as a factor for the flood conditions. Dam authorities and meteorological observatories had forewarned the Government of West Bengal that in view of the heavy rainfall in catchment areas huge volumes of water would have to be released from reservoirs. In the early phases of floods water was released without alerting people in many areas. In Midnapur district, for example, release of water without notice at dead of night caught villagers unawares and thousands of helpless victims were washed away.

Millions of people had been marooned as waters had swamped vast areas. They were either drowned, or had perched on tree-tops or on anything they could cling to above deep waters. At many places people were not rescued for days together. They had been without shelter, food and drinking water and left to their lot in such perilous conditions. Several political parties, including our own, many volunteer organisations, local youths and common people had come forward with whatever resources they could quickly mobilise and carried out rescue and relief operations on their own initiative.

The State Government had moved on the scene slowly. Its relief had been scanty compared to the gigantic requirements in the face of the disaster. An amount of military assistance at disposal was pressed into service at a late stage. The Government relief did not reach many areas. Even where it had reached complaints had been made of selective distribution and misappropriation of relief items.

Millions of houses have collapsed in the wake of the floods. Standing crops worth several million rupees have been destroyed. Millions of cattle have perished. Countless families have been utterly ruined and have no homes to go back. Thousands still live on embankments, railway tracks, and other high grounds waiting for the waters to recede.

All their means of livelihood have been lost. A very large number of people have no trace and the toll of death of the helpless, unforewarned victims of the terrible floods caused by release of huge volumes of waters from reservoirs is still a matter of guess. The disaster indeed beggars description and is nothing short of a national calamity.

The need of the hour is to mobilise all resources, organise the human power, and co-ordinate and conduct all efforts and helps on a war footing, and take the full responsibility of giving all relief to the affected people and rehabilitate them to a normal life. In view of the dimensions of the disaster, we feel that it should be deemed as an obligation of the nation and the Government, both the Central and the State, should mobilise all resources at their disposal without delay and stand by the people at this hour of grave peril.

Our Party, the SUCI, feels greatly concerned for the condition of people and the state of affairs prevailing. On the strength of the experience, our Party has gained in mobilising resources, organising human power, and carrying out rescue and relief operations in all the flood-affected districts and taking into account the public opinion, we submit here an analysis of the floods with a view to ensuring speedy and efficient relief and rehabilitation operations free from corruptions and malpractices, and to preventing recurrence of any such disaster in the near future.

To determine at this stage what should be immediately done to meet the need of the hour, a dispassionate analysis of the recent lapses ought to be undertaken in the spirit of a scientific probing to prevent any tragic recurrence of lapses. Else, people would not pardon the offenders.

It cannot be denied by any means that the situation was not met on a war footing. In the first place, the issue of prior warnings and precautionary arrangements may be considered. The State Government had been forewarned by relevant authorities about possibility of flood conditions developing. Incidents that followed reveal that practically no heed was paid to it. People were not alerted and no arrangements were made in advance to transport affected people to safe areas and keep sufficient food-stuff, medicine etc. in ready stock to help people in the eventuality of floods arriving. Release of huge volumes of water without giving notice to people had inflicted unfathomable miseries and a tremendous loss of life and property. If alerted in advance, people could at least try to save their lives by moving to safer places on their own. At Tilpara and Hinglo in

Birbhum district, local villagers, apprehending danger when they had found water levels in the reservoirs rising menacingly, had asked the authority to open the gates as a precaution to avert any possible disaster.

But here again no concern was evident in the Government's attitude, and it had depended entirely on the lower level officials. The bunds of the barrages gave way on the night of the 26th September, the floods ravaging vast areas and killing many.

In this context the issue of flood prevention measures assumes pertinence. We had better turn our attention back a little into the past. It has been well within the knowledge of the constituents of the present 'Left Front' Government of West Bengal that the flood control projects in the State which were all planned and executed by the previous Congress Governments, suffer from serious defects for which reason devastating floods have repeatedly affected the people of the State despite the projects. In the first place, there have been defects in the planning itself, like destruction of the natural drainage network, inadequate number of dams, inadequate canal system, inadequate measures for prevention of soil erosion in catchment areas etc., as pointed out by the eminent scientist, late Dr. Meghnad Saha, and some other eminent engineers. In the second place, the maintenance of the dams, bunds and barrages has been extremely poor. The constituents of the present 'Left Front' Government along with our party had criticised the previous Congress Government, when they were in the Opposition, for its apathy, irresponsibility and incompetence in confronting so grave a problem as of floods. Movements were also organised on this issue. Moreover, they have had the experience of the floods of 1956 and 1969 in this State. They are now in

power in the State for the last 16 months. But with all this background, knowledge and experience, this Government has hardly done anything in this regard. Not to speak of taking any long term measures, it did not set itself to the task of undertaking the long overdue short-time measures like repairing the dams, bunds and barrages, dredging and de-silting of river beds and reservoirs, widening of canals etc. It can hardly be argued that the government had found no time for it. For, it must be knowing the gravity of the problem, and it has been running administration since quite long before the onset of monsoon this year. The plea of lack of adequate power cannot sustain itself, for, the State Government is the sole controlling authority of the Mayurakshi and Kansabati Projects and is also a partner of the D.V.C.

A grave experience of people in urban and rural areas has been that for a good number of days at the time of floods there had been no semblance of Administration. It appeared the State Government had abandoned administration. But is it not true that Administration is to administer under all conditions? The test of a responsible government is not only in how it runs administration in normal times. But the acid test really comes from how it runs administration in difficult times, in hour of peril.

In reality, in the first difficult days, the actual rescue and relief operations were carried out by local youths in different areas and by some political parties, including ours, and workers of some volunteer organisations. It is noteworthy that whereas the common people had taken it upon themselves and had plunged into urgent operations, the Government did not consider it necessary to build up any machinery to organise this invaluable human power who know

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Memorandum to the Prime Minister

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the task, who have the courage, and who have the experience. Instead, it depended upon the bureaucracy. What was needed and is still needed is to mobilise all working hands from any corners whatsoever in order to create confidence among people and release their energy to come in terms with blind forces of nature. Under the circumstances, the Government's task should have been, in our opinion, to mobilise the vast human power, experience, courage and initiative of the people. In this State which is nursed by rivers and populated by countless boatmen who grow up and live on waters, service of these people would have been of immense help. Countless country boats ply on the rivers and canals and there are many lying with the Port Trust Authority and several State and Central Government establishments. These could be utilised. But while this government had engaged a large number of motor boats to carry an armed contingent of police to beat up the refugees from Dandakaranya at Marichjhapi in Sunderbans, it pleaded non-availability of an adequate number of boats to rescue marooned people.

Being at the helm of State Administration, the State Government has no little resources at its disposal. But tragically enough, it had resigned itself to a position of helplessness declaring in despair that it lacked adequate man power, adequate number of boats, navigation maps, and the like. If one thinks coolly one cannot help conclude that the circumstances did not really justify the plea of helplessness. For, it is the lesson of history that man can achieve the impossible if only the willingness, determination and the right measure at the right moment are there. Instances can be cited in galore from the present case itself. Relief squads of our party, workers of some volunteer organisations and many common

people could procure different kinds of country boats from around and made use of indigenous rafts to rescue thousands of marooned people. At Birbhum, our party's relief workers had made use of even flat iron cauldrons that are used in villages for preparation of molasses. Local youths, employees of non-Government organisations and volunteer of many clubs and social organisations could reach distant places with relief and medicines on their own. Our Party has been trying to do its best to render rescue and relief services to people even into the deep interior in many rural areas. Our relief squads and medical teams are still engaged in these operations in all the affected districts.

It is indeed tragic that the Government did not draw lessons from the first and the second phases of floods, for which reason lapses had recurred during the third phase too.

In the last phase, flood water had come in a flash at some places, but elsewhere it had slowly inundated low lying areas. With a view to utilising any available times before floods had arrived, representatives of our party had met the Government authorities in time, but in vain. For example, at Midnapur they met the Divisional Commissioner of Burdwan to impress upon him the urgent necessity of making arrangements for boats, improvised shelters, and foodstuff for those people who would have been hit by gathering flood waters. But the demand went unheeded to the cost of poor villagers at many places.

In this connection, reference should be made to another aspect of the matter. In view of the virtual absence of Administration, the question of utilising the available services of the military had been hanging before the State Government. But it did not move in time to press the military into action. And when, much later, the military assistance was

sought, only a handful of personnel from the services was deployed, which obviously fell far short of the actual requirements. Only a few military helicopters were put into service. This had made the relief operation unusually delayed. And this deployment could not reach many water-logged places. Did not the military have the necessary equipments to negotiate swirling flood waters? How does then the same trained military force undertake all sorts of hazardous tasks at times of war? The Government pleaded its inability to reach relief to many places for want of transports. The people wonder how the military relays articles overhead in human chains to distant spots in war fronts!

In view of this role of the 'Left Front' Government in the State a question has been tormenting the minds of people whether this tremendous loss of life and property was avoidable or not; whether the disaster has been solely due to the natural calamity, or apathy, incompetence and lack of concern for people, on the part of the State Government have compounded with the natural factors of heavy rainfall and consequent flood conditions to multiply the people's misery manifold. If we take a hard look at the facts on the role of this 'Left Front' Government keeping in mind the role a government with a genuinely pro-people attitude ought to play, when faced with a natural calamity like this, the pertinence of the question becomes obvious and the answer seems not far to seek.

There is a growing feeling among all who have been seriously probing into the causes of the calamity, with a view to preventing any possible recurrences in future that if the 'Left Front' Government were guided by a pro-people attitude, a genuine concern for the common people, and had acted in time, done

all it could to take preventive measures, to make precautionary arrangements and to alert the people of the impending floods, this disaster of such magnitude could have been avoided. The State Government, on its part, appears to be keen only on presenting the case as the inevitable consequence of Nature's fury; but the millions affected are not agreeable to side with the Government's comfortable position.

The demand has, therefore, arisen from among the people that a non-official inquiry commission be instituted to probe into the truth of the calamity, find out those responsible, give them exemplary punishment and to work out long term measures to prevent recurrence of floods. It is only to be expected that the 'Left Front' Government, whose constituents had demanded similar commissions on several occasions during the previous Congress Government, would not try to shirk its responsibility by turning a deaf ear to this demand.

The Chief Minister of West Bengal has been all along trying to impress upon the people that the death toll in floods has been quite low. Only the last week, on 20.10.78, the Government's official spokesman put the figure at 812. Although the actual figure cannot be ascertained now, since the administration has been at doldrums and the government has been unwilling to rely on the organised power of the people, yet the government's figures appear absurd in view of the numerous reports of death on massive scales at many places. These reports have trickled into newspapers despite the government's imposed restrictions on the dissemination of flood news. A cabinet rank Minister of the State Government reported that at one village alone in Khairasol in Birbhum district, more than 1000 people had died. Workers of the relief squads of the SUCI and the non-official organisations have also been witness to countless corpses strewn around in the ravaged areas. The District Magistrates also told that they were arrang-

ing mass burials, 10 to 15 corpses at each grave, and were frantically looking for 'doms' even three weeks after the floods. Moreover, the Government itself had reported that many areas had been inaccessible, under 20 feet deep water which came in a flash and caught villagers unawares. Whereas the severity of floods has been so extreme, people's experience and common sense do hardly allow them admit these death figures as anywhere near the terrible truth.

Three pertinent points may be raised in this context. First, it is strange that the government bases itself, in regard to death figures, on confirmation by police and administration only. But no sensible government can afford to ignore the direct knowledge of responsible political parties and the common people, which this government has been doing to underscore the actual death figures. Second, how could the government instruct the military and permit some non-official organisations to bury the unclaimed dead bodies without proper arrangements for tracing their identity? Third, it is strange that hardly any photographs of the dead have been allowed to be published. In the devastation of Andhra Pradesh last year, it may be recalled here, numerous pictures of the helpless victims of the cyclone helped reveal the grim picture of the disaster. It is for this reason that we have demanded that the inquiry commission should probe into the actual figures of death. One of the ways, we suggest, can be that the figure of population in every affected village prior to the floods should be compared with the figures of those who return after the floods.

On distribution of relief materials, people have been complaining, right from the beginning, to workers of various relief squads, including ours, and to Press reporters of a partisan attitude and even misappropriation of relief materials by workers of the constituent of the 'Left Front' and a section of the

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NO OBSTACLE COULD STAND IN THE WAY

OUR PARTY STANDS BY THE FLOOD VICTIMS

In our editorial observation in the issue of October 1, 1978 and in the memorandum submitted to the Prime Minister (published alongside in this issue) we have pointed out how the 'Left Front' Government in West Bengal behaved with utter callousness, indifference and apathy in the face of the national disaster in the wake of the successive floods. In contrast to this total failure of the Government to rise to the occasion and its unabashed attempt to advance pleas for its failures another feature has emerged. From the experience our party has gained in organising rescue and relief work in all the flooded districts for the last three months two facts stand out clearly. First, for a proletarian party no obstacle however gigantic can stand in the way of working for the cause of the people.

It is the cause that counts—the people are in distress—this has been the only matter for consideration and the party plunged into rescue and relief work with revolutionary determination and grits, no amount of obstacles and thousands and one difficulties cannot stand in the way of standing by the side of marooned people. Second, the people themselves

whose response and feelings for the distressed are truly magnificent are the inexhaustible source of power. True the people are the greatest resources. It is only by organising people's initiative on a massive scale that the situation caused by such a national disaster can be met.

From the very outset of the successive floods our party plunged into immediate rescue and relief work with all its resources in all the flooded districts of West Bengal and specially throughout Murshidabad, Midnapore and Birbhum districts on a most extensive scale. Everywhere the party comrades immediately rushed to the rescue of the people, brought them to safety day and night in untiring and unceasing efforts, undaunted by obstacles, hardships and tremendous risks to their life. Countless comrades themselves, specially in Midnapore District, had been caught in the floods and some of them even lost their own family members but in this hour of deepest grief they immediately began to rescue other people and ran relief camps, distributed food among the marooned people in areas declared

'inaccessible' by the Government and wherever speedboats were said to have been unable to move. In Birbhum district, in parts, where all communications had completely broken down our comrades even walked for 40 K.M. along washed out rail lines often without any foothold hanging on precariously to poles, trees or anything in order to reach detached places and organise rescue and relief work. Whenever and wherever party comrades heard any cries for help of people being washed away they plunged into the whirling flood waters at a tremendous risk to their life and saved the people. In Daspur, Midnapur district, a 13 member relief team went on rescuing people and stayed there till the last person from that village had been brought to safety. For a long time contact was lost with that team and the worst was feared but fortunately they could save themselves some how. From the very beginning of the floods State leaders of our party rushed to the affected districts, guiding the District Committees in the task of organising relief work, supervising and setting up relief camps and even themselves taking part in relief works among the people. Many relief teams from Calcutta reinforced the ranks of comrades in the districts and medical teams are still moving in many areas

specially in Midnapore and Birbhum, inoculating the people, treating the sick and distributing medicines among the people. That our party has been able to do such vast and extensive relief work is only due to the wonderful response and help that the people volunteered. In Midnapore for example, when we sought the help of the government for providing us with a few boats for rescuing the marooned people they refused though boats were made available for carrying the furniture of some local CPI(M) leaders. After this, local boatmen responded to our appeal and came forward in many places and worked along with our comrades in rescuing the people. These experienced boatmen had no difficulty in steering the boats to destination and themselves took these relief teams to the marooned villages, while the government had to requisition speedboats from European countries which the navy complained they could not operate for lack of maps. Again in Birbhum, where molasses are prepared in large iron cauldrons the people spontaneously offered those to carry cooked food when no boats were available even after seeking the help

from the government and themselves took part in the rescue and relief operations, helping particularly to run gruel kitchens.

It was this magnificent response of the people which our party has been able to mobilise and organise in many ways everywhere and that is how depending on the people our party could find ways and means to reach marooned villages under the most difficult circumstances where government relief did not even reach and distributed food and garments which had been collected from the people. For three months the party has been continuously and almost daily conducting collection of relief material, money, food, clothes and medicines throughout West Bengal; yet the response of the people has not diminished. Still people are contributing and with what trust and appreciation they are looking up to our party! Everywhere the people have been telling "With SUC we can rely that relief will reach the people", and "SUC is the true friend of the people" or "SUC comes forward first always and stands by the people in all their problems".

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Flood victims of Gochhati, Daspur, District Midnapur receiving relief materials from Comrade Sukomal Dasgupta, Secretary West Bengal State Committee, SUCI.



Flood victims standing in queue for receiving relief materials in a relief camp at Daspur, Midnapore.

Our Party Stands By The Flood Victims

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In the villages, our party has given a call to every household to contribute regularly two chappaties; the response has been overwhelming. Even a beggar woman on the roadside, for example, on seeing a team of party comrades carrying relief material to some village stopped them on their way brought out two chappaties and said, "This is all I have, you take it for the hungry flood-stricken people. I put it away for my son but he can go without food for one day, those people need it much more." So, for example in Bharatpur Thana under Kandi subdivision and in part of Baroan Thana alone in Murshidabad District the chappaties thus collected in seven days amounted to 49000 pieces and 2720 kg (68 maunds) chappaties, besides rice, gur, other dry food and hundreds of pieces of garments.

Such goodwill and such



Our Party workers are going for rescue and relief work in places of Birbhum declared 'inaccessible' taking great risk of life.

feeling for the distressed among the common people the Government is completely ignoring while it is crying hoarse all the time that they want people's help. The government far from mobilising the power of the people, the greatest asset, the greatest resources of all, is, instead, relying on bureaucracy and the paid 'volunteers' sponsored by CPI(M) dominated Co-ordination Committee from Calcutta paying them Rs. 5, a day for relief work inside Calcutta and Rs. 15 a day for work outside. What a sense of 'patriotism' of the leadership of this organisation conducted by CPI(M)!

Our party has organised



Flood victims in Birbhum receiving relief materials from Com. Pratiba Mukherjee, Dist. Secy. S.U.C.I.



In Howrah Station SUCI workers with food stuffs and other relief materials waiting for the trains.

photographic exhibitions throughout Calcutta and in the districts on flood and relief work, not only to show our relief work but to make the people aware of the dimension of the disaster even in terms of loss of human life which the government is underplaying by dishing out a ridiculous figure of a few hundred dead. Thousands have been washed away by the floods. Another purpose of the exhibitions is to instil in the people a sense of responsibility towards their fellow brethren who have lost all their property and means of livelihood in this grave disaster. In

this respect also the government has most miserably failed the people and is carrying out relief in a most obnoxious partisan manner and playing with the life and future of millions of people. Not only this, the party is drawing the attention of the people that at this stage of scientific development, flood should not be a regular annual feature. Proper drainage scheme in the lower basin should immediately be taken up and loopholes in the flood control measures should be

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MEMORANDUM TO THE PRIME MINISTER

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Government employees who have been charged with distribution of relief items by the Government.

In the first place, in many cases the relief is given selectively to those who are known to be workers or supporters of the major partner of the 'Left Front'. Second, at many places where Panchayats are controlled by opposition parties, the Government relief is not handed to the Panchayat bodies, whereas the Government has been insisting on channelising relief through the Panchayat bodies. Third, relief squads of the SUCI and many voluntary organisations have been obstructed and refused permission at many places to distribute relief to the people at a time when Government relief had either not reached or been too scanty. Fourth, relief items have been snatched from non-official relief squad workers and they had been asked to hand over their materials to workers of the constituents of the 'Left Front'. Fifth, and the most criminal of all, relief items are being misappropriated by workers mostly of the major partner of the 'Front' and many Panchayat Pradhans and a section of the Government employees. It has been appearing in the Press that fightings have ensued at many places among constituent parties of the State Government over distribution of relief; even internecine fights among factions of the major partner are also reported. This is the state of corruption to which the parties of the 'Left Front' and Administration run by it have reduced themselves. Under the circumstances, how can people be assured that proper distribution of relief will be made to the needy?

While common people, in the face of all odds, have been doing relief operations without any remuneration the Government is found to be employing mostly members of the Coordination Committee, sponsored by the major partner of the

'Front', for relief work on Rs. 5/- to Rs. 15/- as daily allowance. Our Party demands that this sum be spent on unemployed villagers to do relief work in their localities.

The report in a section of the Press on 22.10.78 that the Chief Secretary to the Government of West Bengal has instructed the District Magistrates by radiogram (report No. G. R. 43) to contact specified persons of the Co-ordination Committee for distribution of relief is an indication of how administrative neutrality is being trampled to the detriment of even the minimum democratic norms in the country.

At the present stage the Government plans to discontinue relief operations. It proposes to give instead gratuitous relief in villages. But homes of many people have been washed away. Houses of a still greater number have been so damaged that these are unfit as shelters unless repaired thoroughly. Consequently, a great number of people will actually be deprived of relief if the relief operations be discontinued now. The need of the hour is to provide adequate relief to all people in affected villages till the lands have been reclaimed from sandy wastes and harvesting completed.

Although pleas have been advanced on one or another count to account for failures, it cannot be denied that the State Government has failed to discharge its duty to the people. But people cannot but note with dismay at the same time that the Centre has so far restricted its concern in the main to inquiries about the State's requirement of assistance from it. None can, however, overlook the question of the Centre's responsibility either on this score. In the face of the national proportions of the calamity, has the Central Government risen to occasion? Has it come forward with all resources at its command to save the flood-ravaged humanity? Does

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Central Committee Statement on Chikmagalur By-Election

BEFORE ELECTION

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to referbush the image of Mrs. Gandhi again before the country. Victory of the Janata Party has enabled the ruling bourgeoisie to achieve its cherished design of introducing two-party system with the sole object of stemming the growing tide of revolutionary movements and giving a fresh lease of life to the crisis-ridden capitalist system in our country by confining the legitimate democratic mass movements within the narrow bounds of parliamentary politics. Now the ruling class is trying to give a concrete shape to this two-party system and make it stable. Mrs. Gandhi's attempt to reappear in the parliament with the backing of the ruling class clearly confirms how correct the timely warning by our Party was.

Our Party also showed that, being an alternative of the same ruling class, the Janata Party does not have any fundamental difference with both the Congresses. When the need was to set up a genuine Left candidate as opposed to both these two principal bourgeois parties, it is a pity that neither the CPI nor the CPI(M) has come forward to unite all Left and democratic parties and forces to oppose both these bourgeois parties by setting up a candidate of the united Left. On the contrary, the CPI, in the name of 'neutrality', is indirectly supporting Mrs. Gandhi while the CPI(M) has preferred to openly support the ruling Janata Party.

Our Party repeatedly showed that at the present juncture a united front of the genuine Left and democratic parties and forces can alone work as the real alternative and instrument of struggle to thwart the attacks of the ruling class and advance the cause of the exploited masses of our country on to the path of anti-capitalist Socialist Revolution.

But in utter negligence to this historic need, the two so-called communist parties, the CPI and the CPI(M), have been all through pursuing a typical opportunist politics of winning over the confidence of the ruling bourgeois class in their bid to appear as the third alternative and thus find a comfortable place in the bourgeois parliamentary politics. And because of these two social democratic parties, despite our repeated attempts, a true Left alternative could not take shape in the country.

Under the situation, the struggle of the people has become difficult and complicated. In the last general election, the people routed Mrs. Gandhi from power because, in the very interest of the ruling bourgeoisie, she suppressed all legitimate struggles, took away even the last vestiges of democratic rights and civil liberties of the people and finally foisted upon them the black rule of Emergency. Even after her defeat at the last poll, she has been all along shamelessly defending her anti-people misdeeds and now, with the backing of the ruling bourgeois class, is trying to stage a comeback to justify her black rule.

This by-election once more brings to the fore the fact that, unless and until a true Left alternative takes shape in the country, people will have to face such difficult situations again and again, and a true Left front can never develop unless the genuine revolutionary party is strengthened. So, the historic task of the people in general and the voters of Chikmagalur in particular is to ensure defeat of Mrs. Gandhi as well as to forestall the two-party system—a fascist conspiracy of the ruling bourgeois class. But while doing it, the people will have to conduct this election battle in such a way as to organise themselves and help develop a real Left alternative as the instrument of

AFTER ELECTION

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date at the poll. The people of our country must, therefore be on the constant vigil against the forces of authoritarianism and fascism.

"This unwelcome victory of Smt. Gandhi brings to the fore the urgent necessity of exposing and giving defeat to the menacing game of the ruling class to give a concrete shape to the two-party parliamentary system aimed at arresting the democratic mass movement within the four walls of parliamentary politics through a real left alternative and an instrument of struggle provided by the united front of all genuine left and democratic parties which the leadership of the CPI and CPI(M) have been obstructing so long. The leaders of these parties would do well to remember that making friendship with the main two bourgeois parties like the Congress and the Janata Party is no way to fight fascism.

"We must also remember that the slogan of a third alternative within the ambit of parliamentary politics is another bourgeois fraud. The real need of hour, therefore, is to build up a united front comprising all the left and democratic parties and forces to give rebuff to the forces of authoritarianism and fascism, whatever may be their forms, by strengthening democratic mass movements for restoration, preservation and extension of democratic rights and against oppression and exploitation of all kinds.

struggle of the toiling millions and strengthen the only revolutionary party, the Socialist Unity Centre of India, founded by the Great Leader of the Proletariat COMRADE SHIBDAS GHOSH, which is the only hope of emancipation of the people.

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the belated visit of you, as the Prime Minister of the country, justify your claim that your Government is facing the problem on a war-footing? The common people expect that the Central Government should answer these questions not in words but in deeds.

Now, our Party has demanded formation of all-Party Committees with adequate power down to village level. We strongly feel that the question of bypassing the right of the elected bodies like the Panchayats by these committees is absolutely irrelevant here, because it is only the all-party committees ready to face such a grave situation which can really instil confidence among the people. But if the all-party committees are of advisory nature only that will fail to meet this need of the hour because what is necessary today is not advice only but doing something concrete to effectively implement the decisions. Moreover, the decisions must be binding on the Government and nothing should be allowed to stand

Memorandum to the Prime Minister

in their way which require that these committees must enjoy adequate power capable of meeting any possible interference. Then again, such committees should be formed down to the village level because there is an urgent need to implement the decisions expeditiously even at the grass-root level and because the real operating machineries should be such that they are not vulnerable to corruption, nepotism, etc., and are armed with necessary check-and-balance arrangement which may be ensured only by these all-party bodies at the base.

It should be pointed out in this connection that for reasons best known to the State Government, our Party has not been invited till date to most of the district committees.

The question of rehabilitation of the vast section of poor people who have virtually lost everything in the floods now comes uppermost. The urgent need is to reconstruct houses and provide farmers with cattle and ploughs. Seedlings and

not seeds should be supplied for speedy cultivation. Full scale cultivation of the 'rabi' crop should be made in the ensuing season. Farmers who have been able to return to their villages are asking for supply of the required materials by 15 days, but the Government has been showing its usual lack of concern and is yet to take initiative in this regard.

It hardly requires to be pointed out that the announced grant of Rs. 200/- to each family that has lost home is wholly inadequate for the purpose. In point of fact, there are reports that not even Rs. 200/- but Rs. 100/- are being paid to affected families. Villagers now want building materials like bamboo, timber, straw, tiles etc., for construction of houses, since not only their prices are high, it is virtually impossible to procure these materials at many places.

In fine, we feel that it is only futile to debate, at this hour, over who has greater responsibility, the Central Government or the State

Government, for flood prevention and financing relief and rehabilitation operations for the suffering humanity. This would only fritter away energy and hamper the tasks that are most urgently called for now.

We, therefore, make the following demands to the Government:

1. All-Party Relief and Rehabilitation Committees with adequate powers will have to be formed from the State down to block and Panchayat levels.

2. The Government must take stern measures against all kinds of discrimination, malpractices and partisanship in relief and rehabilitation works.

3. Effective measures for prevention of epidemics will have to be initiated immediately.

4. Free medicine and free treatment must be provided to the flood-stricken people.

5. The Government must take full responsibility for total rehabilitation, including economic rehabi-

litation, of the flood-affected people.

6. The flood-affected people must be exempted from taxes, and loans given to them must be written off. Students in affected areas must be exempted from tuition fees, and all necessary articles for study, including text-books, must be supplied free to them.

7. All-out State trading, both retail and wholesale, in foodstuffs will have to be initiated, and essential commodities on fair price will have to be supplied to the people.

8. Black marketeers and profiteers must be given exemplary punishment.

9. A non-official inquiry commission will have to be instituted immediately:

(a) To probe into the factors which had added to the natural calamity to give it such dimensions;

(b) To find out those responsible for it and give them exemplary punishment;

(c) To work out measures, long as well as short term, for prevention of recurrence of floods in future.



Party relief Squad is proceeding to Maina, worst flood hit police station in Midnapore District, Comrade Debaprosad Sarkar, leader of our Party in the West Bengal Assembly is seen in boat (front)

Remarkable Victory of Copper Majdoor Union

POLICE ASSAULTS WORKERS OF MOSABONI MINES

Ghatsila, November 2 :

For some time past workers of the Mosaboni Group of Copper Mines (near Ghatsila, Bihar) had been conducting a movement under the leadership of the Copper Mazdoor Union affiliated to the UTUC (Lenin Sarani) over several legitimate demands including payment of 20% bonus. A relay strike was held from July 11 to 21 last in all the 6 mines. The workers' solidarity and determination had forced the Management of the Indian Copper Complex under the Hindustan Copper Limited to sit over negotiations and concede 18% bonus. This had marked a great victory for the workers under the leadership of the Copper Mazdoor Union, since they had been denied bonus ever since nationalisation of these mines. In fact, at no other government organised sector of industry have the workers been able to force the Management fulfil demands to an extent. Later, by conducting another movement, the workers had again forced the Management to agree to pay an advance of Rs 200/- to each, the amount to be recovered after 4 months in 12 instalments. The growing strength of the workers rallying under leadership of the UTUC (Lenin Sarani) had caused a deep panic among the Management who resorted to an illegal and conspiratorial policy in payment of the advance money.

On 30th October last, 8000 workers of all the mines had assembled to protest against the conspiratorial policy of the Management. Later, on the same day, the Magistrate on duty and

the D.S.P. met the leaders of the Copper Mazdoor Union and intimated them the decision of this Management to pay the advance money to all workers within a day or two. The leaders of the union next held a meeting of the 8000 strong workers at the Mosaboni Bus Stand and informed them of the Management's decision.

Then the workers had dispersed. But the ASI of the Mosaboni PS, Sri Raha, took a keen interest in entertaining a complaint of the office bearers of the MMLU (INTUC) and falsely implicated many of the leading organisers, including some Executive Committee members of the Copper Mazdoor Union, with several charges and arrested 8 of them. On 31st October, Comrade Kanai Mahali, a leading organiser of the union and also the Mukhiya of Badia S.P. under the Mosaboni P.S. was physically assaulted by the A.S.I. himself, Comrade Gurucharan Mahato and Manoranjan Giri, members of the Executive Committee of the Copper Mazdoor Union, also were assaulted by the A.S.I. The news of the assault infuriated and agitated the workers and a new phase of movement began.

The Copper Mazdoor Union has demanded immediate suspension of the said A.S.I. pending inquiry into this matter so that the police officials involved in a clique with the management are made to learn to honour democratic norms and traditions. The union has also urged the Government of Bihar to stop police interference in legitimate trade union movements.

Resist 'Black' Industrial Relations Bill UTUC (Lenin Sarani)'s Call to the Working People

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the attempt to convert the trade union movement into a mere appendage to the capitalist system, being subservient to bourgeois class aims and objects and the attempt to install two-party parliamentary system with the help of two or three chosen parties are parts of the same evil design of the crisis-ridden bourgeoisie—the basic motive being perpetuation of the capitalist class rule by suppression of militant mass struggles and diverting peoples' resentment to the narrow bounds of legalism-reformism. Whichever party, both from the government and outside, therefore is piping the tune of 'law and order', 'peace in industry' and is creating obstacles in the path of organising united mass struggles is, in reality, a helping ally of the bourgeoisie in working out its evil design.

The working people are, therefore, to be very much alert and vigilant against the dangerously deceptive role of social democracy. The social democratic parties and forces, the forces of compromise between labour and capital are putting brakes on united militant mass struggles, disrupting the unity of the working people on some plea or other, holding out false promise and illusion about improvement in the lot of the exploited people by economism-reformism. These forces will try to soften the mood and distract the attention of the working people from the real danger as also its politico-economic roots. Unless their trickeries are exposed and the working people remain vigilant, it will not be possible to give a full blooded rebuff to the bourgeois government.

In the background of this, it is no doubt a welcome development that some of the Central Trade

Unions have chalked out the programme of a protest convention and mass demonstration before the parliament on the day of its opening of Winter Session i.e. on 19th and 20th, this month, at New Delhi.

UTUC (Lenin Sarani) was the first among the Central Trade Unions to bring to the attention of the working people of the serious danger that lay hidden in the move when the Bill was in its earlier stage of drafting. Since then, UTUC (Lenin Sarani) has been urging upon the Central Trade Unions to shed all illusions and get prepared for forging a united militant movement to stall this ill-designed move of the government. The proposed strike of the Steel Workers as also of the strike on 28th June in the public sector undertaking could have cleared the ground in that direction. But this could not materialise because of the waverings and dubious stands taken even by the left trade unions like CITU, AITUC and others.

It is really deplorable that when broadest possible unity of the working people is to be developed and a genuine programme for sustained movement to be chalked out to thwart the government's move, the Central Trade Unions like CITU, AITUC and others, behind the talk of unity, have been trying to exclude the fighting trade union centre like UTUC (Lenin Sarani). After finalising the programme, they have sent down a formal invitation to UTUC (Lenin Sarani). The leadership of UTUC (Lenin Sarani) after thorough examination, has come to matured conclusion that they would join the programme, despite all difficulties attended with late receipt of information, keeping in view the paramount necessity of broad

based unity of the working people against the common danger.

In reply to the general invitation extended, Comrade Pritish Chanda, the General Secretary, UTUC (Lenin Sarani), it is reported, has, in a letter pointed out to the anti-unity stand and unethical method they have resorted to in organising the programme. Comrade Chanda has however assured support and co-operation to the programme on behalf of UTUC (Lenin Sarani). A couple of hundred delegates from UTUC (Lenin Sarani) it is expected will attend the programme at New Delhi.

SUCI Workers' glorious role in Flood Relief

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plugged. Besides, the government is harping on the tune that the flood in West Bengal was only a natural calamity. It was to shield the criminal faults and callousness of the officers of the irrigation department and dam authorities. Our party has demanded open, all-party enquiry committee into all these wide public complaints. People saw that here was the party that was telling the truth, voicing the just demands of the people.

Throughout the days the exhibitions have drawn large crowds from all sections of the people. With what feelings some of the common people even touched the photos of dead bodies, it was as if their personal bereavement, loss of their near and dear ones! Many people have thanked the party telling: "We didn't know all these; you have upheld the truth, the whole truth!" The people are realising their friend, their guide, their organiser—SUCI, the party of the revolutionary proletariat in our soil.

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Edited & Published by Sukomal Das Gupta from 48, Lenin Sarani and Printed by him at Ganadabi Printers & Publishers Private Limited, 52B, Indian Mirror Street, Calcutta-13.